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Hearing on “Restoring Veteran Trust and Patient Safety” will take place Tuesday, May 3 at 9:30 a.m. Central Time

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – In response to a letter written by Rep. Russ Carnahan (D-MO) and Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH), the House Veterans' Affairs Committee will hold a hearing entitled “Sacred Obligation: Restoring Veteran Trust and Patient Safety” this Tuesday, May 3, in

Washington, D.C.

In the wake of recent patient safety incidents at VA Medical Centers in St. Louis and Dayton, OH, Carnahan and Turner sent a letter (attached) Veterans' Committee Chairman Jeff Miller (R-FL) in March, requesting a hearing to review the response of the Veterans' Administration and to determine what steps have been taken to improve patient care. Tuesday's hearing will feature high-level witnesses from the Veterans' Administration and other agencies tasked with oversight, and will discuss proactive strategies for addressing underlying issues, including:

- Standardized reprocessing for reusable medical equipment;
- Systematic ways of limiting the activities of suspect practitioners before patients are put at risk;
- Risk management and notification processes for veteran patients.

“Our veterans deserve the best quality care available, period,” said Carnahan. “It shouldn’t matter whether they live in St. Louis, Dayton, or anywhere else. My focus is on finding solutions that ensure veterans here in St. Louis receive the same top quality care that the VA provides elsewhere in the country, and I hope this hearing helps us take another solid step toward that goal.”

This year, Carnahan joined the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs in order to push for better patient care at the Cochran facility and other VA Medical Centers. Carnahan has pressed for improvements at the Cochran VA Medical Center after a series of problems were reported. In February, Cochran suspended surgeries after staff noticed evidence of contamination of surgical instrument trays; earlier this year, nurses who work at the medical center came forward with detailed concerns about access to needed medical supplies, broken equipment, infection control and staffing levels; and in June of last year, Cochran announced sterilization problems in its dental clinic.

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